

Professionalism in the hierarchy of young people's lives according to the value theory

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(Recived May 3, 2009; Accepted May 22, 2009)

ABSTRACT: From methodological point of view, high evaluation of professionalism in people's value hierarchy is considered to be corresponding to the demands of market economy and is required for successful integration of people into the modern social economic environment. Young people – “professionals”, those who have chosen professionalism as one of seven most important life priorities, are considered to be a typological group in comparison with the rest of the young people with an aim to determine the share of “the typical” in the life value hierarchies of young people – “professionals”. The results of the survey conducted in Daugavpils region have showed that the typological group of young people – “professionals” is quantitatively rather small; however it has its own specific features, especially when it concerns subjective self-evaluations – these are, as a rule, people who are more satisfied with many aspects of life, more optimistic and more successful. The main life values of young people – “professionals” are equivalent to the typical values of the rest of the young people; however, “professionals” at the same time consider active social life values to be significant ones as well.

Key words: professionalism, value theory, typical values, youth, value hierarchy.

RESUMEN: Desde un punto de vista metodológico, la alta puntuación en la jerarquía de valores, del profesionalismo se considera acorde a las demandas de la economía del mercado y es necesario para la integración exitosa de las personas en el ambiente económico social moderno. Las personas jóvenes “profesionales”, las que han elegido el profesionalismo como una de siete prioridades más importantes de la vida, constituyen un grupo tipológico diferenciado del resto de las personas de su edad. Los resultados del estudio llevado a cabo en la región de Daugavpils han demostrado que este grupo de personas numéricamente son pocos; pero tienen sus propias características específicas, especialmente cuando se refiere a autoevaluaciones subjetivas - éstas son, en general, personas más satisfechas con muchos aspectos de la vida, más optimistas y más exitosos. Los valores principales de la vida de la gente joven de los “profesionales” son equivalentes a los valores típicos del resto de las personas jóvenes; sin embargo, los “profesionales” al mismo tiempo consideran también de un modo significativo valores activos de la vida social también.

Palabras clave: profesionalismo, teoría de valor, valores típicos, juventud, jerarquía del valor.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Modern value theory took its rise in Germany and Austria during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century (Mead G., 1900;

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Prescott J., 1967; Giddens A., 1971; Simmel G., 1972). Value theory encompasses a range of approaches to understanding how, why, and to what degree humans should value things, whether the thing is a person, idea, object, or anything else. This investigation began in ancient \o "Philosophy" philosophy, where it is called \o "Axiology" axiology or \o "Ethics" ethics. Early philosophical investigations sought to understand \o "Good and evil" good and evil, and the concept of "the good". Today much of value theories are \o "Science" scientifically \o "Empirical" empirical, recording that people do value and attempting to understand why they value it in the context of the recent social sciences (Mitrofanova A., 1998; Santrock J., 2007; Sztompka P., 2007; Pakizeh A., Gebauer J., Maio G., 2007; Wilson B., Ikeda D., 2008).

The value theory, the guidelines of which have been elaborated by E. Durkheim, defines values as things that correspond to the ideals or reflect them. The ideals change in the course of history alongside with changes in social groups. As a result, changes of the ideals lead to new value systems. During the periods of changes or crises, people try to implement new ideals that have appeared, thus, forming society's "soul". These ideals become the driving force of social changes, because they reveal real and functioning capacity of social groups. The function of ideals is transformation of reality (Durkheim, 1995).

Thus, ideals stipulate what values exist in a particular historical and social point of time, since "values are benefits" (Weber, 1990), which satisfy the most topical people's or social groups' needs on the way to the ideal condition. The author does not agree with the opinion that "values are something what people do not possess" (Dobrenkov and Kravchenko, 2005), however, she thinks that values are something what people are lacking in order to approach the ideal. For instance, the results of the sociological survey conducted by Institute of Social Investigations at DU in 2008 within the frameworks of the scientific programme "The Youth on the Way from Education to the Labour Market" show that young people place health on the third place in the hierarchy of values, meanwhile their parents – on the first (see Table 1); moreover, education is more significant for those young people, whose level of education is lower (see Table 3).

Any life value is always an external object versus the person (Dobrenkov and Kravchenko, 2005), who while trying to achieve his or her ideals develops the needs, which in their turn, are satisfied by one or another value.

Several aspects of life values can be analysed from the viewpoint of the theory of human capital. It would be logical to assume that values are those human resources (economic, political, symbolic, etc.), which give their owner the highest benefit (money, moral satisfaction, social status, etc.) i.e. those, which have, in economic terminology, the highest social profit. And the second compulsory condition is insufficient amount of this resource. Thus, deficit resource with relatively high social profit, i.e. relatively significant, but deficit part of human capital becomes a value. The following empirical analysis of data attempts to prove this theoretical assumption.

It is necessary to mention that life values analysed in practice are not only external objects, as it is accepted in theory, but also person's characteristics, which can be especially valuable as well. Usually, in empirical value researches, values – external

objects (such as strong family, good friends, beloved person, etc.) are analysed alongside with such values as self-confidence, peace in the soul, etc. In this respect, practice does not follow theory and, on the one hand, it can be considered as a drawback of empirical sociological research, when instruments of the research are elaborated without serious theoretical and methodological background. However, on the other hand, the theory of human capital considers that even human characteristics (e.g. good upbringing, self-confidence, etc.) can become socially profitable resources, i.e. human capital. And if some person has a lack of them, they can become values. The author thinks that, to a considerable extent, it is theoretical contradiction between the value theory and the theory of human capital, however in practice it is not usually highlighted, because any valuable or socially profitable human characteristic can be also considered to be an external phenomenon, which exists "around" this person, thus giving him benefit. For instance, even self-confidence, which "arises from" a person, "follows" him or her and ensures his or her benefit, i.e. it is socially profitable and satisfies human needs, in the same way as any other "external" life value.

Thus, theoretical background of this research is formed by the value theory and its ideas about person's life values as external objects, which satisfy person's internal needs related to his or her ideals.

Research object, on the basis of which the author will check the above-mentioned and other further developed assumptions, is young people from 15 till 29 (326 people) and young people from 15 till 19 (110 people) from Daugavpils region. **Research subject** is life values of young people and their parents belonging to different social economic and demographic groups, special attention being paid to professionalism as a component determining "capitalistic spirit". The methodological background of the research of professionalism as a value is described by general analysis of young people's and their parents' life values and by evaluation of the significance of professionalism in the structure of values of young people and their parents belonging to different social groups.

It is necessary to mention that respondents were given 25 values determined beforehand. Of course they can fail to reflect all possible life values, but the researchers hold that these values allow to perform systemic analysis of respondents' value orientations.

One more important methodological assumption, which has to be mentioned before analysing empirical data, is the one about types and typological groups related to value orientations. As a rule, researchers while analysing values find a *type* of the research object by dominants of value orientations, calling it, for instance, "typical inhabitant of Daugavpils" (Menshikov V., 2006. p.41) or "Latvian residents' value concepts" (Latvia. Human Development Report, 2007. p.74). It has to be mentioned that a *type* is a useful methodological construction, the essence of which is similar to M.Weber's ideal type – strong dominant, which is "clean" from everything additional and accidental – and allows transition to determining typological groups. In reality people's value orientations usually do not correspond to a type or typical model, that's why the construction of a *type* is so useful, because it allows to determine different typological groups on the basis of the correlation of the typical and the atypical.

Thus, the aim of this research is to determine typical value orientations of young

people living in Daugavpils region, by means of general analysis of the hierarchy of young people's life values, as well as to analyse one of typological groups of the research object – the one, which gives professionalism a dominant value – and to determine both this group's specific features and the share of the “typical” in it.

HIERARCHY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIFE VALUES. A GENERAL APPROACH

In order to identify the core and general structure of young people's life values, first of all it is necessary to analyse the comparison of hierarchy of 15 – 19 year old people's life values and the ones of their parents.

Table 1. Hierarchy of young people's and parent's life values (* the high value of average values, the high significance of the corresponding value. ** Asymp. Sig.'s few than 0.05 means that there are statistically significant differences between groups).

<i>Life values</i>	<i>Young people, n=326</i>		<i>Parents, n=110</i>		Mann-Whitney Test, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)**
	<i>Average values*</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Average values</i>	<i>Rank</i>	
Strong family	3.53	1	3.76	2	0.597
Beloved person	2.98	2	1.60	6	0.000
Good health	2.83	3	4.15	1	0.000
Good friends	2.69	4	1.28	9	0.000
Well paid job	1.80	5	1.93	5	0.609
Children	1.53	6	3.49	3	0.000
Financial welfare	1.52	7	2.61	4	0.000
Good education	1.45	8	0.95	10	0.029
Self-confidence	1.37	9	1.29	8	0.969
Rest, entertainment	1.09	10-11	0.61	14	0.013
Peace in the soul	1.09	10-11	0.87	11	0.920
Self-realization opportunity	0.90	12-13	0.79	12	0.897
Interesting job	0.90	12-13	1.42	7	0.010
Other people's respect	0.79	14	0.65	13	0.352
Health	0.75	15	0.58	15	0.533
Sex	0.57	16	0.18	20	0.001
Soul eternity	0.55	17	0.42	16	0.392
Religion	0.38	18	0.29	17	0.896
Professionalism	0.37	19-20	0.25	18	0.475
Power	0.37	19-20	0.04	25	0.005
Active life position	0.33	21	0.05	24	0.003
Motherland	0.30	22	0.15	21	0.277
Interaction with interesting people	0.29	23	0.24	19	0.701
Respect, fame	0.23	24	0.11	23	0.058
Travelling	0.19	25	0.14	22	0.990

Young people's and their parents' value orientations are measured in this research by means of the following approach: respondents had to choose seven most significant life values out of 25; after that they had to arrange them according to the significance of each chosen value in the respondent's life starting with the most significant one. The value, which took the 1st place was given 7 points, 2nd place – 6 points, etc., 7th – 1 point. The values not chosen by the respondent were given 0 points. It allowed to rate values in a more precise way as compared to other measuring methods (Rubanov, 2008).

As the overall results of the survey summarised in Table 1 show, the main life values of young people are mainly the most widespread human values - strong family, beloved person, good health and good friends. The comparison with the younger (15 - 19) group's parents' core of life values, it is obvious that with time life priorities tend to change from romanticism to pragmatism and those who are around – alongside with family and health values such values as children and material welfare start to domineer as well; thus, “pushing out” such values as good friends and beloved person, as well as values of active social life, from the list of the most significant priorities.

Analysis according to three main education groups – lower than secondary, secondary (comprehensive and professional) and higher than secondary (incomplete higher and higher) – will help to determine if the level of education influences their life values.

Such values as strong family, beloved person and good health remain the most topical ones in all education groups of young people; however young people belonging to the group of higher or incomplete higher education take all these life values more seriously, giving them proportionally higher significance. One more tendency shows that the higher the level of education, the lower significance of friends and higher significance of material welfare. It is interesting that significance of education as such is increasing while the level of education is growing. It proves the theoretical assumption mentioned in the beginning of the article that a value is something a person is lacking.

The significance of young people's four main life values does not depend on subjective life luck, however, significance of friends decreases alongside the increase of life luck. One more interesting fact is that young people who consider themselves unlucky evaluate well paid job as considerably most significant value. Indirectly, it proves that young people mainly evaluate life luck by their success on the labour market. This statement can be also substantiated by the factor analysis of the results obtained in the course of the sociological survey of Latvian inhabitants about national development conducted in 2004 – 2005.

As this analysis shows, 1st factor, which includes satisfaction with his or her present work in general, basic work salary, work environment and conditions on the basic workplace, his or her income, his or her own material welfare and the one of his or her family, gives 33% or the third part of total satisfaction with life, and this is a supporting argument to the fact that both young people in Daugavpils region and Latvian inhabitants in general feel satisfied with life only if they have stable and well-paid situation on the labour market. None other aspect of personal life can compensate or substitute significance of this factor in total satisfaction with life.

METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE RESEARCH OF PROFESSIONALISM VIEWED AS A VALUE

Successful functioning of market relationships in economy require not only formal market institutes and market agents, but also specific life values, specific culture and life perception, which make market relationships rational and civilised. In 2007, researchers of Latvian National Development Review established that social economic development requires domineering of such life values as being ready for changes, and orientation to achievements and self-realisation (Latvia. Human Development Report 2006/2007). However, there is one more life value, which forms the core of “capitalism spirit” and is a moral background for rational, civilised market functioning. It is *professionalism*.

The thing, B.Franklin heard all the time from his father – old Calvinist, became the main personal characteristic: “Have you seen a person – master of his craft? He will face the kaiser” (Shapovalov, 2008). Craftsmanship or efficiency of people who follow their skill, profession, business or earning money – if it is implemented in a legal way – is the moral core of market relationships, which logically leads to the situation when demand for professionalism takes the first place.

It is implementation of professional challenge together with getting satisfaction from one's professionalism, which gives special sense to life. In their turn, material wealth and public respect could be the criteria for professional success. For a person, who leads such life, the main thing is a systemic and rational need for legal earning money within the frameworks of his or her profession. The morals of rational market relationships negatively evaluate full satisfaction with what has been already achieved, not even mentioning wealth, unemployment and hedonism. Earning money as an aim roots from the requirement to successfully manage capitalistic economy. It is evident that in order to run a business, there should be spontaneity in addition to the ability not to spend all income on personal and family consumption, but to invest in the future, business development while orienting to the perspective and leading ascetic life. “Remember, personal profit as well as common sense are more important factors in professionalism in that you have to be honest, forthright, adaptable and open enough to growth for yourself to know that part of professionalism is genuinely sensible rational self-interest profit to grow yourself and your life on” (Clayton J., 2009).

The analysis of young people's life value hierarchies together and by certain social groups shows that professionalism has relatively low significance in the system of young people's life values – no matter what age, gender, education and other factors, professionalism usually takes 19th-20th place in the list of 25 life values included in the survey.

In order to empirically analyse professionalism as a value, the following method was used: out of all the amount of young people, only those who included professionalism in the list of 7 most significant life values were selected. There were 44 such respondents; the significance of professionalism was distributed in the computer programme in the following way:

- 1st place – 1 person;
- 2nd place – 3 people;

3rd place – 4 people;
 4th place – 5 people;
 5th place – 7 people;
 6th place – 10 people;
 7th place – 14 people.

As it is seen, if professionalism was included in the list of 7 most significant life values, it was placed on the 6th or 7th place. However, these 44 people could be those who theoretically can have “capitalism spirit”. As a result, for further comparative value analysis, two groups of young people were selected: young people – “professionals” and all the rest.

Table 2. Hierarchy of young people's life values by professionalism (* the high value of average values, the high significance of the corresponding value. ** Asymp. Sig. 's few than 0.05 means that there are statistically significant differences between groups).

<i>Life values</i>	<i>„Professionals”,* n=44</i>		<i>All the rest, n=282</i>		Mann-Whitney Test, Asymp. Sig. (2- tailed)***
	<i>Average values**</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Average values</i>	<i>Rank</i>	
Professionalism	2.73	1-2	0	25	0,000
Beloved person	2.73	1-2	3.01	2	0.612
Good friends	2.50	3	2.72	4	0.660
Strong family	2.36	4	3.72	1	0.010
Good health	2.27	5	2.91	3	0.224
Well paid job	2.02	6	1.77	5	0.256
Good education	1.84	7	1.39	9	0.133
Children	1.43	8	1.55	7	0.358
Soul eternity	1.41	9	0.42	17	0.000
Rest, entertainment	1.32	10	1.05	11	0.366
Financial welfare	1.16	11	1.57	6	0.244
Religion	1.14	12	0.26	19	0.000
Self-confidence	1.09	13-14	1.42	8	0.955
Motherland	1.09	13-14	0.18	22	0.000
Power	1.00	15	0.27	18	0.000
Self-realization opportunity	0.98	16	0.89	13	0.416
Active life position	0.95	17	0.24	20	0.000
Peace in the soul	0.91	18-19	1.11	10	0.825
Interesting job	0.91	18-19	0.90	12	0.513

In general, both young people's groups – “professionals” and all the rest of young people have the same value core – strong family, beloved person, good health and good friends. The only difference, among “professionals” these values are comparatively less significant than among the rest of young people. It is interesting that material welfare is more topical among those young people who did not include professionalism in the priority list of life values. In their turn, young people – “professionals” consider well paid job to be more significant. It shows that for “professionals” it is more important to earn money themselves, thus implementing their professionalism. “Professionals” consider good education significant as well, alongside with such values as prestige, fame, power, active life position, interaction with interesting people and travelling. In general, for “professionals” active social life values are the most significant ones. It has to be mentioned that religious values, such as religion itself, soul eternity and motherland, are also more significant for young people – “professionals”. It corresponds to M.Weber's theory about religious background of “capitalistic spirit”, however survey unfortunately has not covered respondents' religions.

In general, it is possible to make a conclusion that young people with “professional spirit” have the same significant life values as the rest of young people only with slightly lower evaluation, alongside with more topical active social and professional life values.

It would be useful not only to analyse life values of both groups of young people, but also to compare them according to other objective and subjective indices.

First of all, it is possible to consider that average age of both young people – “professionals” and the rest of young people is the same: 20 years. Their own and their families' material welfare is almost identical (the only difference is that among “professionals” there are less those who live very economically, and hardly manage to save for big purchases). However there are considerable differences in the family statuses: among young people – “professionals”, there are twice less married ones or those who live with a partner, in addition there are 13% more single ones. As to nationality, there are slight differences as well: there are more young people – “professionals” among Russian young people and less among Latvian and Polish ones. However, the most significant differences, which are directly related to professional activity, are differences in work status: only 42% of young people – “professionals” have CV opposed to 60% of all the rest of young people. As to studies, 73% of young people – “professionals” study, 25% of them at high schools; among the rest of young people, there are less those who study – 61%, 19% of them at high schools.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that “professional spirit” is more characteristic among those young people who have not started their professional activity yet; however, taking into consideration that there are more pupils and students among them, it is possible to assume that they get ready for their professional career in a more serious way, thus, hoping to implement their “professional spirit” in real life.

As the results of comparative analysis of subjective self-evaluations show, there are much more differences between young people – “professionals” and all the rest young people than there have been when their social demographical indices have been

compared. First of all, as to earning money, young people – “professionals” more often (58% in comparison with 45% of the rest of young people) would prefer to be richer, even though they had to risk and use their initiative. Young people – “professionals” 10% more often consider themselves to be successful people (8-10 points according to 10 point scale). As to the dilemma “freedom-equality”, the choices are almost identical, however anyway young people – “professionals” slightly more often choose freedom and respectively more seldom – equality. It is interesting and in a way paradoxical that young people – “professionals” 7% more seldom think that education has big influence on person's material welfare. In spite of that, young people – “professionals” more often study and plan to continue studies, moreover they are more satisfied with their education. It can be explained by the fact that young people – “professionals” see other factors of life luck, which can be as significant as education. One more significant feature of young people – “professionals” is that they more often are satisfied with their life and they are more optimistic about their families' material welfare in the nearest future. What concerns choice of their profession, young people – “professionals” more often take into consideration what profession specialists have higher salaries, more interesting work, higher demand and prestige in the society. Moreover, young people – “professionals” relatively seldom choose profession on parents' advice. In addition, young people – “professionals” evaluate their health condition higher.

As it has been mentioned before, both young people – “professionals” and all the rest of young people who participated in the survey, consider such life values as strong family, beloved person, good health, and good friends to be significant ones. However, life values of typological group of young people – “professionals” are different: family, friends and beloved person are comparatively less important for them than active social life, work and professionalism. Moreover, the differences in values of the first – traditional – group are relatively low than the differences in values of the second – initiative – one. It means that young people – “professionals” also quite often choose family, beloved person and friends as their life values, however much more often they choose such initiative values as active life position, professionalism, interaction with different people, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1) From the point of view of new theoretical concepts, which appeared in the early stage of the market economy and developed in the age of globalization of innovative social economic processes, life values of modern young people are characterized by new quality defined by the economic terminology as profitability that determines durability of a value;
- 2) At the same time, value orientations of modern young people are mainly determined by the domineering social structures, such as traditions, parents' values, and contradict with the demands of the market economy, especially with its component dealing with business administration and innovations;
- 3) From methodological point of view, high placement of professionalism in the hierarchy

of life values is considered to correspond to the demands of market economy and is required for successful integration of people into the modern social economic environment;

4) Young people – “professionals”, those who have chosen professionalism as one of seven most significant life priorities, are viewed as a typological group and are compared to typical young people and their life values with an idea to detect the share of the “typical”;

5) Typological group of young people – “professionals” is quantitatively not large in the total number of young people, though it has specific features, especially when it concerns subjective self-evaluations – as a rule they are more optimistic, more successful and more satisfied with certain aspects of life;

6) Although young people – “professionals”, the same as the rest of young people, consider the same life values to be topical ones, young people – “professionals” find active and professional life values to be comparatively more significant ones; it forms the specific feature of this typological group as compared to the average young people.

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